M
245 Next to manioc, bananas occupy the first rank among the native crops, at least among the peoples of Lake Leopold II, the [59] lower Lukenie, and the region between the Congo and the Kasai. Among the tribes of the upper Lukenie, cultivation of banana trees is less developed, and in the Bena Dibele-Kole region it is almost completely absent.

The natives prefer to cultivate the large banana. It is less juicy and more floury than the small one and yields larger crops. The banana groves are always set up near the village and most often directly behind the dwellings. It follows that these groves have the general shape of the village and, in a way, frame it.

Banana trees, in order to thrive, must be planted in very fertile soil which has been well cleared and deeply turned. To promote their growth and increase their yield, the natives dump into the banana groves all the waste from the kitchen, ordure, ashes, and sweepings from the regular cleaning of the village

S
[346]

Fig. 39. Hut for the Nkisi of the Hunt and a Banana Tree with Flower and Fruit, Village of Madjuku, Bobaie Tribe.

M
[574] and huts. They also go into the groves to answer the calls of nature.

M
243 Maize is not cultivated on an important scale. Beyond the post at Tolo, maize seems to be completely unknown. Among